

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in response to the Office Action dated December 28, 2006. Claims 1, 5 to 7, 26, 34 and 42 have been amended to clarify the claims and not for purposes of distinguishing over the art cited in the Office Action. No new matter has been added by these amendments. A Petition for a Two-Month Extension of Time and a Request for Continued Examination are submitted herewith. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account 02-1818 for any fees which are due in connection with this Response.

Claims 1 to 47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,059,289 to Vancura ("*Vancura*"). Applicant respectfully disagrees with and traverses this rejection for at least the reasons set forth below.

Applicant has amended Claims 1, 5, 26, 34 and 42 to further clarify that these claims are directed to enabling a player to pick a plurality of masked selections. Claims 1 and 26 have been amended to clarify that, among other elements, the claims include enabling a player to pick a plurality of masked selections. Claim 5 has been amended to include a plurality of masked selections. Claim 34 has been amended to include at least one display device and at least one input device operable with at least one processor to provide a predetermined number of picks to a player and to enable the player to make the predetermined number of picks of a plurality of masked selections. Claim 42 has been amended to provide, among other elements, displaying a plurality of masked selections in a first related game, associating at least one functional symbol with the masked selections and enabling a player to make a predetermined number of picks of the masked selections.

Vancura does not disclose a plurality of masked selections. Furthermore, any selections disclosed in *Vancura* are not player-selectable. *Vancura* discloses a primary slot machine and a secondary slot machine. The primary slot machine issues a bonus qualifying signal to the secondary slot machine to start play of a bonus game when a bonus qualifying event occurs. *Vancura*, column 3, lines 30-33. In the bonus game, the secondary slot machine displays value symbols and end game symbols on the reels.

The value symbols determine the amount of winnings. *Vancura*, column 3, lines 34-36. Winnings based on value symbols generated on the reels are accumulated until the game ends. *Vancura*, column 3, lines 42-43. The number of end game symbols generated on the reels are also accumulated in the bonus game, and the game ends when a predetermined number of end game symbols are accumulated. *Vancura*, column 14, lines 44-47. The accumulated winnings and end game symbols are displayed as a figure ascending an incline carrying a knapsack. The accumulated winnings are displayed in the knapsack and the accumulated end game symbols are displayed as incremental progression of the figure up the incline. *Vancura*, Fig. 4. In the bonus game, the player is offered an opportunity to end the game and take the accumulated winnings or risk losing all of the accumulated winnings by proceeding in the game. *Vancura*, column 15, lines 24-27.

Page 2 of the Office Action seems to suggest that the generation of end game symbols on the reels to determine the progress of the bonus game are selections. The Page 3 of the Office Action also refers to a player's decision whether to continue in the game, risk more, surrender or stop as examples of selections. However, the generation of end game symbols are not player-selectable selections. Moreover, even if a player's decision in the game is determined to be a player-selectable selection, making a decision whether to continue a game does not teach masked selections. Therefore, *Vancura* does not disclose enabling a player to pick masked selections. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1, 5, 26 and 34 are patentably distinguished over *Vancura*.

Applicant has amended Claims 6 and 7 to make clear that a plurality of advancements are associated with each of a plurality of player opportunities and, upon accumulating a predetermined number of advancements, a plurality of credit values are associated with each of the plurality of player opportunities. Page 5 of the Office Action attempts to equate ending a bonus game when the value of accumulated winnings exceeds a certain amount with this feature of Claims 6 and 7. However, Applicant fails to recognize any suggestion by this disclosure of the claimed invention and respectfully submits that Claims 6 and 7 are in condition for allowance.

Vancura does not disclose a first outcome of a first component of a game determining a second outcome resulting from a second component of the first game as in Claim 22. Page 6 of the Office Action suggests that the outcome of the bonus round is dependent on the primary slot machine determining whether a bonus round will be played. However, *Vancura* discloses a bonus qualifying event occurring in a primary slot machine to enable a player to play the secondary slot machine containing the bonus game. *Vancura*, column 3, lines 18-20. The outcome of the bonus round does not appear to be determined by the primary slot machine. In fact, whether a game is played or not is not a determination of its outcome. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that *Vancura* does not disclose a first outcome of a first component of a game determining a second outcome resulting from a second component of the first game.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claims 1, 5 to 7, 22, 26, 34 and 42, and the claims which depend therefrom are in condition for allowance.

An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for allowance and such allowance is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions related to this Response, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLP

BY Adam H. Masia

Adam H. Masia
Reg. No. 35,602
Customer No. 29159

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